CHURCH PLANTING

FEBRUARY 17, 2015 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

LEAVE A COMMENT

Church Planting Book Review: Church in the Making by Ben Arment

Church planting is not easy work.

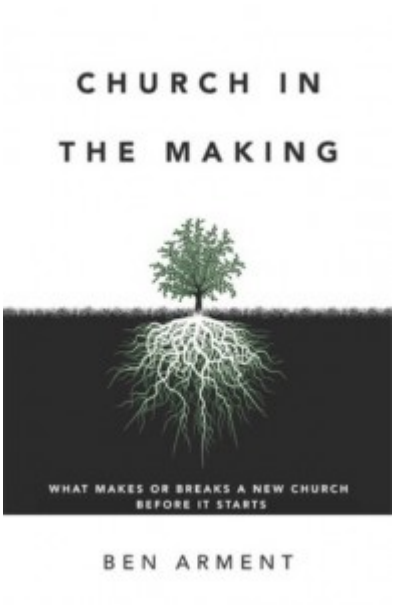
Ben Arment shares some lessons he has learned out of his church planting experiences in his book,

Church in the Making: What Makes or Breaks a New Church Before it Starts

In the introduction, Arment writes for church planters who struggle.

> How did church planting become such a spiritual crapshoot? Why is it that some churches fail why others succeed? How is it

> that prayerful, hardworking men and women who are called by God and filled with faith could fall flat on their faces?



Pulling from his own experiences in church planting, both from one that struggled to get going and one that he is currently in, he takes this angle:

- Understand the spiritual receptivity of the community where you are planting.

He writes:

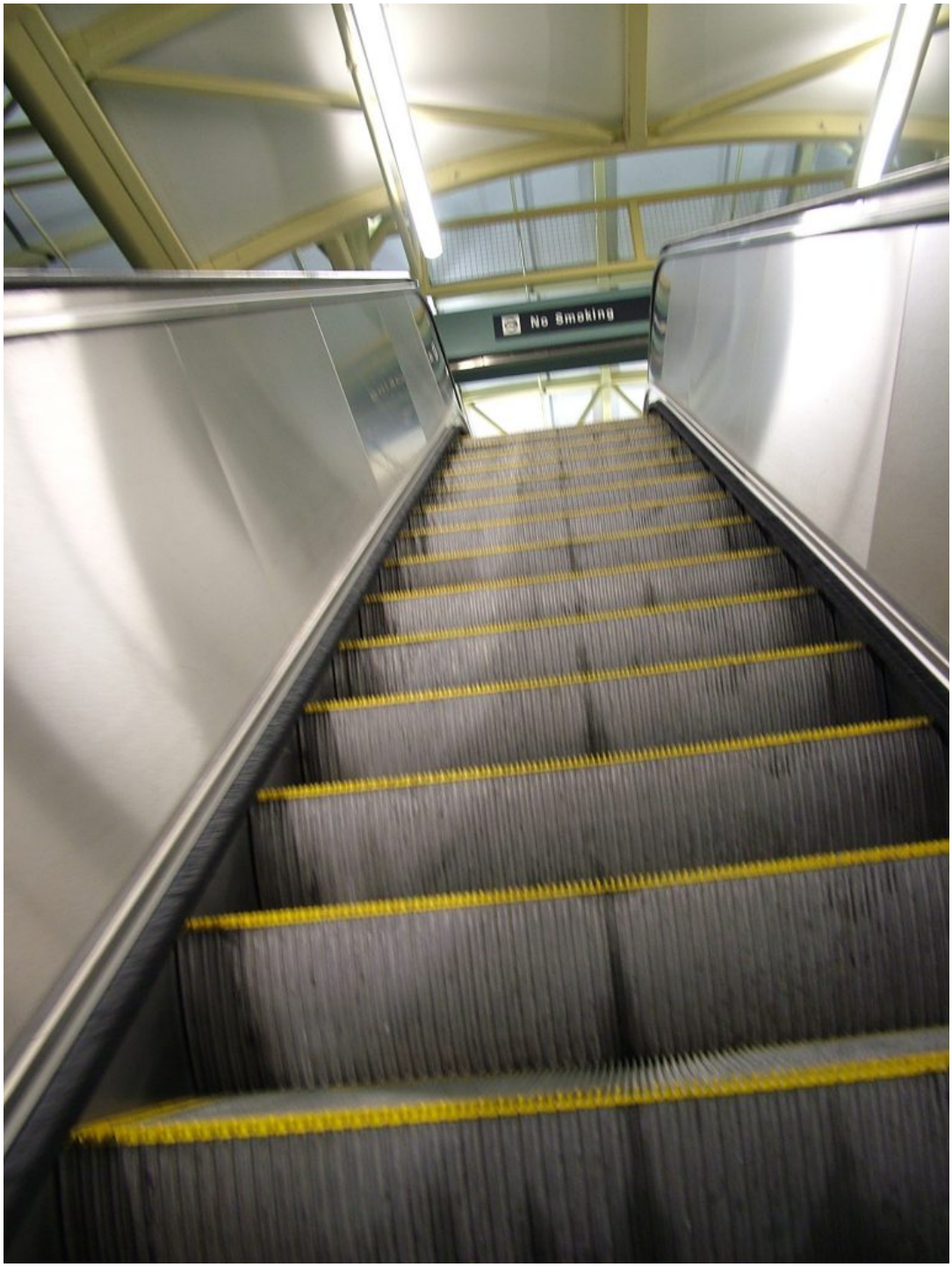
> This book attempts to uncover the mystery of church planting. . . . Church planting, it turns out, is remarkably organic.

Part 1 is called Good Ground – where Arment shares about spiritual receptivity at the level of local community. I write about spiritual receptivity a lot, but focused on the one-to one conversation level. Arment brings the wisdom of doing that work in the community.

Part 2 is called “Rolling Rocks.” Arment looks at momentum and suggest some was to capture that social momentum.

Part 3 is called “Deep Roots.” Arment looks at how a new church development springs out of the the roots of it’s community, rather than a vision being imported from another community. Church planters will have a deep connection to their local community, some that will take the time to build.

> “Planting a church in a spiritually infertile community can be done, but it’s like walking up an escalator that’s going down.”



I've got the church planting bruises and blessings.

I know that church planting is not easy work from my first hand experiences.

I spent 5 years on the team to start a church for immigrants that still is up and running with it's founding pastor.

I spent 7 years on the team to start a second church for immigrants that continues to this day with it's founding pastor.

Seven months ago, we've gotten our family involved in a third immigrant oriented church that will look forward to starting public services in October 2015.

My role has always been a support role and never the lead pastor. That is consistent with God's calling on my life.

But that doesn't mean I've not seen the ups and downs of launching a new church.

Bruises from disappointments when people walk away.

Blessings of seeing people discover faith in Jesus Christ.

Bruises from early co-leaders who abandon the original vision and bail out.

Blessings from new believers who are so excited about Jesus they keep bringing their friends.

If you are planting a church, you'll like this book

Other books to church planting take a look at leadership and theology of church planting. This book adds a sociological layer, focused on momentum and social networks.

For my take, the core of this book is knowing the spiritual receptivity of the community where you will plant your church.

Some might call this

- Knowing your community
- Community Exegesis (Read Brian Clark's questions)

As I look to participating in my 3rd church plant in a brand new community where I have zero roots, this book points out some of the challenges that will be ahead of me.

Arment uses the parable of the soil types in Matthew 13:3-9 to apply to church planting along with examples from his own experience.

> Not only is your ability to share the gospel dependent on a person's heart condition, but your ability to plant a church successfully is dependent upon your community's spiritual fertility as well. . . It never dawns on most church planters that their target community already has an established degree of spiritual fertility (page 20).

Arment then unpacks

- the spiritual fertility of the "soil" in which the church is planted,
- methods of cultivation,
- tapping into social networks, and
- creating and sustaining momentum.

To see how they all fit together, you'll need to pick up your copy of Church in the Making: What Makes or Breaks a New Church Before it Starts, by Ben Arment

When I have taught churches that want to do a door to door evangelism campaign, I invite them to not only think about how to share the gospel, but also to learn about the spiritual thirst of the community as one of the 5 outcomes of door to door work. I believe that noticing spiritual thirst will open good conversational doors.

You might do the community exegesis of visiting with local officials to learn about the community.

The church you want to plant is not a fortress, but are the people of God on the mission of God. Brainstorm ways the church can bless its community and ask the question "How can we be the best church for the neighborhood?"

In the process, you'll learn the spiritual receptivity of the neighborhood.

Quotes I liked:

- When a new church struggles year after year to see fruit from its activity, we should assume it's not quite time to plant. Instead, there is tilling, watering, and cultivating to be done.
- It doesn't matter how good your service, your worship, or your preaching, your church is ultimately judged by social network.
- There are two activities for church planters: cultivating and planting. If you do the right thing in the wrong season, you get zero results.
- But if people are leaving because they don't like our vision, we should celebrate. Their exodus verifies that our purpose is being lived out. Vision is affirmed not only by the kind of people we attract but also by the kind of people who leave.
- Not everyone in your church can help you further the movement. Nor should they be made to feel guilty if they don't. But fueling a movement is about identifying your connectors and enabling them to reach even more people. This is what Jesus did by investing in twelve disciples to keep the movement going from his time until ours.
- People aren't inspired by spreadsheets. They're inspired by changed lives.
- After seven years of planting a church, it became clear that our most committed colaborers were the people who had found Jesus through our ministry.
- Paul made a groundbreaking statement to the church of Corinth that ought to forever change how we view our churches: "We have the hope that as your faith increases, our area of ministry will be greatly enlarged, so that we may preach the gospel to the regions beyond you" (2 Cor. 10:15–16).
- Planting a church in a spiritually infertile community can be done, but it's like walking up an escalator that's going down.

Links to Other reviews:

- If you are a church planter or thinking about planting a church you should read this book. Don't expect it to make you feel great about planting and pump you up to a spiritual high though. It won't do that at all. What it will do though is make you think through some issues and consider some reasons church planters struggle. I do not agree with all of Arment's points, but I do think he does an adequate job of painting a realistic picture of church planting.
  From: ~~http://pastortodd78.com/book-reviews/church-in-the-making-ben-arment/~~
- Church in the Making by Ben Arment doesn't mince any words, and it has the tone of a soldier who has fought the good fight and won, but at a high personal cost, with the sense that the battles could have

been easier with better intelligence, and mourning the soldier-friends who he has seen fall around him. http://therooftopblog.wordpress.com/05/24/book-review-church-in-the-making-by-ben-arment-terrific-and-not-just-on-church-planting/, also found on Twitter at @JamesWJewell

Related Church Planting books

All links will connect you with the book on Amazon. Any purchase made will earn me a small commission. I've read each of these and can recommend them to the discussion.

- Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age, Ed Stetzer.
- The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay
- Getting Started: A Practical Guide to House Church Planting
- Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens, Niel Cole
- Evangelism Where You Live: Engaging Your Communityby Stephen Pate
- Planting Missional Churches. Ed Stetzer
- Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture (Exponential Series), Brandon Hatmaker
- Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend, Andy Stanley
- ~~Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch~~, Nelson Searcy
- Transforming Church in Rural America, Shannon O'Dell

Connect with the Author

- @BenArment
- http://www.benarment.com/

Order your copy

Order your copy of Church in the Making: What Makes or Breaks a New Church Before it Starts, by Ben Arment from Amazon. I will receive a small commission.

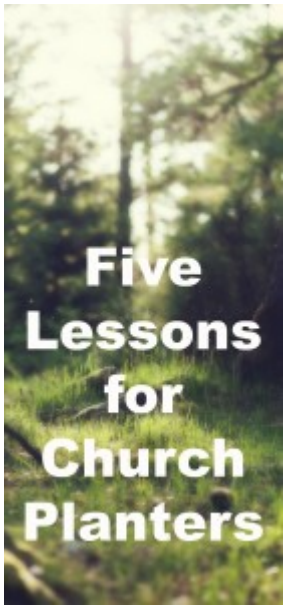
Escalator photo credit: Going up via (license)

Filed Under: Book Reviews, Church Planting Tagged With: book review, church planter, Church Planting

AUGUST 6, 2013 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

1 COMMENT

5 Growth Lessons from Church Planting



One question that has come to me is

> What can a new church plant do to increase it's membership?

For the last 15 years, I've been involved in planting two churches.

Both churches were designed for immigrants.

One of our core values was to "gather the nations to worship Christ."

We felt that our church planting call was to reach out to different nationalities and grow a multi-cultural congregation of new believers. [Read more…]

Filed Under: Church Planting Tagged With: church planter, Church Planting, Grow Your Church, growth, pastor, Personal Evangelism

JUNE 8, 2012 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

LEAVE A COMMENT

Tim Keller on How churches reach cities – Lausanne Capetown 2010

Here's a 17+ minute video of Tim Keller talking at Lausanne about how you reach cities by

1. Planting & renewing churches that are contextual to the city,
2. Establishing citywide gospel movements

By contextual churches, he speaks of planting a church that fits in your context. As part of that talk he gave these marks to becoming contextual

1. A multicultural church has to be extremely culturally sensitive. Your church must expect cultural and racial tensions and accusations of insensitivity. It will always be present.
2. Help people integrate work and faith. People go to cities to work.
3. Must have urban sensibility: comfortable with change, disorder,

4. Evangelism in cities needs to reach different cultures and people. One script does not fit all.
5. City Churches need to be famous in its care for the poor.
6. Artists must be taken seriously.
7. Relationships are extremely important for ministry in a urban context.
8. A city can't be reached by one church, or even one network. You need a city reaching movement.

Keller mentions 10 in his remarks, but I heard 8.

What is a city reaching movement?

When the Body of Christ is growing more rapidly than the general population. What creates a movement?

1. Five or six church planting movements in different denominations and networks. Don't work to increase your tribe, but to help others get going. Collaborate.
2. You need a

- network of prayer,
- evangelistic specialists to focus on universities and youth,
- work on justice and mercy issues,
- gatherings based on vocation (business people, artists, etc), and
- have leaders regularly meeting to discern together what the city needs (not turf wars).

Four questions (from Luasanne's guide):

1. How can the church develop a clearer awareness of the needs of the cities?
2. What has been the response of the church in your context to the increased movement of people to the cities?
3. What are adjustments that the church should make in order to respond to the needs of the city in a relevant way?
4. How can the global church be mobilized to the missiological challenge of the city?

Filed Under: Church Evangelism, Church Planting, Evangelism, Evangelist, Pastors, Video Tagged With: Church Planting, city reaching, Evangelism, lausanne, Tim Keller, urban ministry

MAY 30, 2010 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

LEAVE A COMMENT

In the US, More churches are starting instead of closing

The Christian Post released a new article about the state of church planting in the United States (Source):

> After decades of net decline, more U.S. churches are being started each year than are being closed.
>
> The credit largely goes to the recent increase in enthusiasm for church planting. Stetzer, who leads LifeWay Research, says church planting has become the “it” thing right now and the new evangelism .
>
> Plus, according to FACT2008, the healthiest churches are those that reproduce. Also, the authors emphasize that most new

> churches survive. After four years, 68 percent of new churches still exist and 70 percent attain self-sufficiency by the fifth year.
>
> Every year, approximately 4,000 churches are birthed in the U.S. (500 more than are closed). But much of the church plants have been focused on addition rather than multiplication, the authors point out.
>
> There may be a hesitancy to having a church planting emphasis because “the thinking seems to be [that] there’s a church on every corner and most of them are empty,” state the authors, who have led and studied church plants.
>
> But research shows that new churches fare better when it comes to drawing new people and they have a higher ratio of conversions and baptisms compared to more established churches, according to *Viral Churches*.

This is good news to me.

Traditionally, my denominational system had a governing body that initiated the planting of new churches. They’d raise money, determine a location, gather a team, and then plant a church. They have successfully launched 2 churches, maybe 3 that still exist since the early 1990s. Not a good track record.

Money first, location and organizing team later.

What happens when there is no money – no church planting. That’s what happened.

This past week, I spoke with another church planting coach, and the question we were dancing around dealt with funding new church developments. To look for funding first may be the wrong leg to start on. While it’s an important piece, does it have to come first?

Though I’ve been involved in 2 church plants, each was unique.

The first had a very generous benefactors that believed in the vision. Momentum, passion, vision, timing all seemed to come into play to launch a church that is now 7 years old. It’s plateaued now, and the turnover in people is huge. It still exists as a congregation, but I hear it’s facing different challenges.

Our current church plant

The second one is a parachute drop – we are working with immigrants from another country who moved here to work among fellow immigrants and locals. We are in a high density urban zone neighborhood of 65,000 people that has 7 churches, of which 6 are under 100 in size.

It's been a two years struggle to build a core group. No funding other than missionary support and tent making. No benefactors who give nearly $500,000. I sell my ebooks on church hospitality at this website here which is 1/5 of our income.

However that core group of mostly new Christians met for over a year in an apartment. They stepped out in faith after one year and rented a hotel room for a Sunday. 75 people attended the first gathering a few weeks ago. We've received almost enough provision to rent the hotel room again for our next service.

We keep praying that we'll make an impact where we live, planting a church that plants churches. It's not easy work by any means.

As I've talked with other church planters in my city, hotel rental costs are outrageously expensive, and any other locale is just as expensive. Getting to self-sufficiency through offerings is really tough. Land prices in the neighborhood have quadrupled in 3 years.

As I reflect upon my conversation with the church planting coach, I keep wondering how we can help church planters launch new churches when denominational money is drying out. I don't have all the answers.

I'd love for our new congregation to be viral. Join us in our prayer, that our current church would plant churches.

Filed Under: Church Evangelism, Church Planting Tagged With:Church Planting, Ed stetzer, Statistics

FEBRUARY 5, 2010 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

LEAVE A COMMENT

A pastor listens to the community

Pastor Guiermo has listened to the needs of his community.

These needs form the social outreach part of his ministry to help their new church plant serve and connect with its neighbors.

He’s spent time listening to the needs of the new incoming residents in a part of the area undergoing new construction.

He’s spent time listening to the needs of the new immigrants in the trailer park nearby.

Couldn't load plugin.

(Feed Readers: Click Thru to see the video).

Check out how these community found and met a need in it's neighborhood:

- 5 Keys to a Missional Small Group
- Bridge Building through Caring for your Community

Read: How to Find out Your Community Needs

Filed Under: Church Evangelism, Church Planting, missional, Video Tagged With: Church Planting, community, community outreach,community service, missional

OCTOBER 3, 2009 BY **EVANGELISMCOACH**

LEAVE A COMMENT

Review: The House Church Book

Can a former taxi driver become a recognized world expert in planting house churches?

Tyndale sent me the lastest volume on house churches for review: The House Church Book, by Wolfgang Simson.

George Barna's name is attached to it, just like his name was attached to Tony and Felicity Dale's The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today's Church.

His goal in the book is to show how the gospel can spread virally through rapid formation of simple churches.

His global perspective – watching church planting movements in various mission fields around the world — gives him tremendous credibility and enables him to show the effectiveness of this form of church planting.

Is there a better way to DO church?

In the early 1990s, a research project among young people in Amsterdam revealed:

- 100% were interested in God.
- 99% were not interested in the church.

This startling statistic helps raise the question: Are we doing church so ineffectively that people search for God elsewhere?

The proponents of house churches believe that their model is a more effective way, and a more biblically faithful way.

With each book I have read so far about house churches (admittedly only two), the authors still maintain a respect for traditional churches. I don't see them bashing or trashing current church systems.

Rather, they see people leaving traditional churches for reasons of burnout, dissatisfaction, and a desire to lessen the programmatic burden of too much to do in their life.

My own story right now

I what is happening as well. I was a part of a church that had large gatherings 6 nights a week. Pastor "teached and preached" 5 nights, plus 3 services on Sunday. The same worship team would lead. Even after new bands were grown up, I noticed the same volunteers were running the same programs all the time in the same facility. There were no small groups or cells in this church – everything was done at the facility.

People were too busy serving to meet.

I tried to meet with one of the ministry leaders and got stood up 6 times because "something came up at the church." I didn't want to be part of that system. So we dropped out and found a church meeting in a home.

How are simple churches different from small groups?

The big question I had in mind as I approached this book reflects my own perspective from within the traditional church system. I wanted to know

- How is simple church different than our small groups that we have every week?
- How is simple church different than our small community groups programming?

As I see it, there are three models of small groups:

- Home groups/care groups
- Cell churches
- House churches

Chapter three lays out common elements of a house church.

> A house church is like a spiritual extended family; it's relational, spontaneous, and organic. For its everyday life, a house church does not need any higher level of organization, bureaucracy, or ceremony than an ordinary large family. . . [it forms] its own support structure from within. (32).

As such, it has some common elements of what they do. It's important to realize, this isn't a blueprint, but the skeleton that church planters still have to incarnate locally – the process of contextualization.

- Meating – a fellowship meal.
- Teaching obedience – goal is not just knowledge, but faithful obedience to Christ.
- Sharing – of material possessions, doing life together.
- Praying – the heartbeat of our relationship with god and for each other.
- Helping each other lead transparent lives.

These are the goals of many small groups. Is this not just another version of small groups?

In that same chapter, Simson goes on to explain why this isn't just a small group of a larger church (46-50), by listing some distinctions between the house church and other types of gatherings.

Then in chapter 5, he teases this out a whole lot further by giving a table of 13 differences between house churches and cell churches. Page 75 gives this chart.

Core differences	Cell church	House church

philosophy	‘Chiefdom’	acephalous, headless tribe
reflects	city culture	village culture
flourishes in	warrior nations	peaceful nations as well
cell is	part of larger unit	the unit itself
administration	Jethro system	fivefold ministry
programm	agenda-driven	house church is the agenda
structure	pyramid	flat
leadership	leaders ladder	elders and apostles
centre	headquartered	decentralized
celebration	must	optional
visibility	high	low
set-up	evangelistic	apostolic and prophetic
“big wing’ is	denominational church	the city church

Ultimately, he answers my question that I ask of his text.

Characteristics of a House Church

- Organic, simple and relational, not a professional institutional/organized cathedral/temple/ synagogue.
- Go to the people, not get them to come to church. Present a shop window for God to work.
- Team with 5-fold ministry circulating from house to house.
- Lifestyle discipleship not religious meetings.
- Real, family-based nurturing by a father. Extended family with children included.
- Holistic, spontaneous, intimate, dynamic, secret and powerful.
- A 'table community' centered around a family meal. The Lord's Supper is substantial food.
- Reflects God's character: love, truth, honesty, forgiveness, faith and grace.
- Teaching people to obey God/submission to Christ. Learning is active and interactive. Teach to learn. Christian living is not taught, but caught. Sharing stories.
- Mutual submission and accountability.
- Reaching out to the community.
- Decentralized and flexible, an interdependent network.
- High level of commitment of members and bonding.
- Worship is a living sacrifice not just singing.
- Sharing and praying together.

Advantages:

- Cheap.
- Persecution-proof.
- Effective discipleship.
- Built-in accountability.
- Offers place for life transformation.
- Not dependant on trained leaders/clergy.
- Empowers and mobilizes people.

Who is Wolfgang Simson?

Wolfgang Simson was born in Germany and has German, Jewish, and Hungarian roots.

Since 1983 Wolfgang has been involved in the planting of several churches and in church-based leadership positions, while at the same time beginning a life of extensive global research on growing churches, church planting movements, and revival and mission breakthroughs.

Wolfgang worked for two decades as a church growth, evangelism, and strategy consultant, researcher, and journalist within various Christian networks and regional and global strategy think tanks in close to sixty nations. He is the author of twelve books that have been translated into twenty languages.

His book *Houses that Change the World* (originally published in the UK) is widely recognized as a classic of the house church movement. Now revised as *The House Church Book*, this definitive work offers a comprehensive understanding of the past, present, and future of the house church movement—and the vital role of "ordinary" people in saturating the world with God's truth.

- See: Webinar Replay with Wolfgang Simson – Download the MP3 of our discussion.
- Order: The House Church Book (from Amazon).

Filed Under: Book Reviews, Church Planting Tagged With: Church Planting, House Church, Simple Church, wolfgang simson

1 2 3 NEXT PAGE »

SEARCH THIS WEBSITE …

Stay Informed

In our **free weekly newsletter**, we discuss topics like greeter ministry, church hospitality, and evangelism skills so your church can grow.

Sign up and I'll send it every Friday
so you won't miss a thing.

Name:

Email:

Submit

START HERE

Personal Evangelism 101
Importance of Spiritual Thirst
Evangelism is a Process
Fix Your Church Hospitality
Improve Your Greeter Ministry
For Hospitality Committees
Congregational Evangelism
Personal Evangelism

TOP SELLING RESOURCES

RECENT POSTS

- Conference: 31st Annual Association of Smaller Congregations Conference – St. Simons Island, GA March 2018
- 6 Ways to Follow Up on First Time Church Visitors
- 39 Days of Personal Evangelism–Tweetable List
- 2 Church Website Pages to Help First Time Visitors
- 26 Bible Verses about Guidance
- Listen: 6 Obstacles to Personal Evangelism
- 7 Habits for Highly Effective Personal Evangelism

SPONSORS

Disclaimer: Ads placed here are often based on your browsing history stored on your computer.

WHAT WE DO

- What EvangelismCoach does
- Free “Get a Grip” Coaching Call
- Personal Evangelism Coaching
- Coaching Church Hospitality
- Travel Free Workshops
- Speaking

LETS GET SOCIAL

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- You Tube
- Google Plus

ARCHIVES